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EXPOSE LIBERALS' 'ANTI-WAR' MASQUERADE

Fifty-eight percent responding to the latest CNN poll oppose the war in Iraq. That translates into over a hundred million against the U.S.-led slaughter. This rising anti-war sentiment holds both hope and danger. Many millions share aspects of our Party's condemnation of the profit system and the bloodshed and racism it ceaselessly generates. They perceive the gross immorality of killing, maiming and dying for the benefit of Exxon Mobil and Halliburton. Racist atrocities in the hellholes of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo disgust them. As war's horrors become evident, opportunities to win large numbers of people to a revolutionary, communist outlook increase.

Unfortunately, however, liberal politicians are trying to turn mass opposition to Bush's Iraq war into support for even broader military action. Larger-than-usual primary turnouts and heightened public interest in the November elections reflect a trend harmful to the working class. Every elected official represents one group or another of capitalists. The liberal anti-Bush forces in — or running for — Congress speak for the Eastern Establishment. This is the Exxon Mobil-J.P. Morgan Chase-Rockefeller faction that has the greatest interest in protecting and projecting U.S. imperialism globally through armed force.

MORGAN HEIR LAMONT LETS IMPERIALIST CAT OUT OF THE BAG

Ned Lamont, heir to the J.P. Morgan fortune, provides a case in point. He beat Joe Lieberman in Connecticut's Democratic Senate primary by attacking his Bushite "stay-the-course-in-Iraq" stance. But in a recent speech at Yale Law School, Lamont reassured future Wall Streeters of his devotion to U.S. imperialism. While calling for a withdrawal timeline, Lamont "also said that some troops should remain in Iraq for humanitarian efforts and that others could be redeployed elsewhere in the Middle East." (NY Times, 9/14) Lamont echoes retired general William Odom, who proposes that the U.S. leave Iraq momentarily in order to regroup and gather allies for a massive invasion of the entire Middle East. The Times was careful to note that Lamont "did not rule out military action" against Iran. And alluding to U.S. rulers' current recruiting shortfalls and their failure to mobilize the nation for war, Lamont stressed the need for more military "readiness."

WORLD WAR III AND WEBB S WEB OF DECEIT

Another Democrat sporting the phony "anti-war" label is James Webb, a Senate candidate from Virginia. An Annapolis grad and Marine Vietnam veteran, Webb has dedicated his life to the U.S. war machine. As Navy secretary under Reagan, he oversaw plans to build a 600-ship fleet (a project launched by Carter). Earlier as assistant "defense" secretary, Webb had "directed considerable research and analysis of the U.S. military's mobilization capabilities" (Webb's campaign website). Webb is cynically garnering votes by saying U.S. forces should get out of Iraq. But the old warmonger hasn't suddenly turned peacenik. He has far bigger fish to fry. Webb identifies Russia and China as "issues which demand our strategic focus." More specifically, Webb sees a grand anti-U.S. axis forming from the Middle East to the Far East. "I've been saying for 20 years that China was pursuing a strategy with the Muslim world designed to destabilize the United States and to improve its access to oil." Thus, says Webb, the U.S. "requires mobile forces...in other places around the world."

VETS ERR IN BACKING MURDERER MURTHA

The leaders of Iraq Veterans Against the War seem to have fallen hook, line and sinker for the liberals' lies. They say they "stand behind" Pennsylvania representative John Murtha, the first in Congress to demand a troop withdrawal. They make a serious political error by ignoring Murtha's class allegiance and his imperialist ulterior motives. Like Odom (and General Wesley Clark, Clinton's bomber of Serbia), Murtha favors a tactical retreat from Iraq followed by a major counter-offensive in the Mid-East or elsewhere. "The policy of "staying the course"...in Iraq is hurting our national security" (Murtha's website). Murtha's says, "Redeploy to rebuild our military. Redeploy to meet future threats. Redeploy to strengthen America."

No matter what they say to get elected, politicians once in office cannot and will not forsake the needs of the capitalists they serve. (See Red Eye, page 7 on "Presidents Make War") The Senate's unanimous 98-0 vote on Sept 6th to spend an additional $63 billion for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan blows the cover off liberals' pacifist posturing. The Iraq vets, and other working-class forces deceived by the fake anti-war rhetoric, should know that they, not their Congressmen, are crucial to the solution. History shows that rebellions by soldiers and strikes by workers can slow imperialist war's deadly march for a time. More importantly, soldiers and workers, united in a communist party, can turn imperialist war into a revolution against the imperialists themselves and their profit system. This is the ultimate goal of PLP.✪

Ford Assault on Workers TRIGGERS MASS RACIST JOB CUTS



DETROIT, MI, September 17 — Ford's second "Way Forward" plan to eliminate about 45,000 jobs and 16 factories in the U.S., Mexico and Canada by 2010, is not just a restructuring of the auto industry. Rather it is a realignment of competing imperialists for markets, resources and cheap labor that will lead to new wars and make current imperialist slaughters look like a tea party.

Wall Street's reaction was "Not good enough," and Ford's stock dropped 12%. The plan was criticized for not moving fast enough to cut jobs, like GM's buyout program that slashed 35,000 jobs more than two years ahead of schedule.

In the wake of the great Detroit anti-racist rebellion of 1967 (see box below), 100,000 black workers were hired by GM, Ford and Chrysler. Now we're witnessing the reversal of that reform, and the undoing of 70 years of class struggle.

This is devastating communities across North America with job losses and tax-revenue cuts. For Michigan, already having the highest jobless rate of any state in the U.S. — and the center of Ford's operations — it will be like a Katrina hitting the working class with overwhelming force.

Ford will also shut or sell 17 Visteon parts plants in the U.S. and Mexico that it took over in October 2005 in an effort to prevent the parts maker from going bankrupt. Visteon was spun off from Ford in 2000.

The United Auto Workers union is collaborating as if it was part of the company's Board of Directors (at Chrysler it is!). After unprecedented give-backs last year in health benefits and pensions, it has negotiated local concessions that undermine whatever remains of work rules, job classifications, health and safety provisions and protection against speed-up and forced overtime.

Ford's buyout offer to all 75,000 UAW hourly workers will wipe out union jobs and replace them with low-paid younger workers not entitled to the same health care, pensions and other benefits.

CAPITALISM PUTS THE SCREWS ON

Ford's worldwide automotive operations lost $3.9 billion last year, nearly 20 times worse than the $200-million loss in 2004. July 2007 will mark

continued on page 5

Detroit Auto Workers Veterans of '67 Anti-Racist Rebellion

Next July marks the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Detroit Rebellion against racism, perhaps the greatest anti-racist rebellion of that time and the greatest act of international solidarity with Vietnamese workers and peasants who were fighting U.S. imperialism.

Many autoworkers participated in the armed uprising against racist police terror and racist unemployment. Many were Vietnam vets who knew how to use their weapons. Within 48 hours the racist Detroit police were out of bullets and pinned down in their stations, as was the Michigan National Guard. It finally took President Lyndon Johnson diverting units of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions from Vietnam to crush the rebellion. Dozens were killed, hundreds were injured and thousands were arrested and held on Belle Isle Park because the jails were full.

This struggle terrified the racist rulers. The legacy of these integrated, mostly black working-class heroes will not be lost if we build a base for PLP among autoworkers that will lead to a revolutionary solution.✪

Racist Recruitment Killing Black, Latino, Immigrant Youth

NEW YORK CITY, Sept. 13 — While it's become widely known that the military is concentrating its recruitment efforts in black and Latino neighborhoods, the most telling statistic reveals the results of this effort: of the 38 New Yorkers killed in Iraq, 33 — 87% — were Latino (21), black (8) or Asian (4).

These figures were reported in a 3-part series by Eva Sanchis in this city's Spanish-language newspaper, El Diario-La Prensa, and summarized in an article in the NY Daily News (9/2). "A large number of the dead are immigrants." No wonder the liberal wing of the ruling class is so eager to pass legislation to entice immigrant youth into the army, possibly the biggest new source of cannon fodder for their imperialist oil wars.

These deaths grow out of the racism that puts most of the Armed Forces' 26 recruitment centers in black or Latino neighborhoods: three of five in the Bronx are in the South Bronx, half of the six in Manhattan and six of eight in Brooklyn are in these neighborhoods, and all four in Queens are in immigrant communities. Yet not one center is located "in the upper East Side, the richest neighborhood in the city, which is 77% white and has a per capita income of $67,010" and where "only seven people enlisted in 2004," reports Ms. Sanchis.

Although 51% of city residents are Latino and black, 70.4% of the recruits in 2004 were from these two groups (37% Latino and 33.4% black), according to "Defense'" Dept. figures published by the American Friends Service Committee. "Poor young people need work, training, scholarships, but these are so scarce that they join the military," says a Friends Service representative, "not realizing that this is an institution created for war and not an employment program."

The rulers are going full speed ahead in trying to induce immigrant youth to die for the bosses system

The rulers are going full speed ahead in trying to induce immigrant youth to die for the bosses' system:

• A Bush "executive order allow[s] non-citizens to apply for citizenship after only one day of active-duty military service," to draw from an "estimated 50,000-65,000 undocumented…young adults." (July Senate testimony by Under Secretary of Defense David Chu) Chu extolled the DREAM Act which would give such youth the "opportunity" to join the military and obtain "conditional permanent-resident status."

• Recruiters are establishing booths in "cafeterias in high schools across the nation." (Boston Globe)

• Enlistment bonuses up to $40,000 are offered to immigrant youth who possess documents, an amount exceeding the 2005 per capita income of Latinos ($14,483) or black workers ($16,874), and even white workers ($28,946).

One El Diario reader, a Dominican father, wrote the paper: "My only son was seduced three months ago and joined, but by what I read in his letters he is tired of the Army. I don't know where they are sending him. The sergeant who recruited him told me that it would be for only three months.

"From the day he left I have been in great pain; he is my only son…."

Such is the racism employed by the U.S. ruling class that sends these youth to kill tens of thousands of their working-class brothers and sisters in Iraq who are victims of the same racism, all in the name of the rulers' desperate drive to dominate the world's oil supplies. But based on these youths' experience with racism and unemployment at home and a bosses' war abroad, working with them and winning them to PLP's ideas can turn them around to fight the brass, not their fellow workers. That's the step towards winning them to a revolutionary outlook, and that's our goal.✪

Desperate Brass Sign Up Nazis, Ex-cons, 42-year-olds

Given the failings of the U.S. military in meeting its recruiting goals, the rulers are becoming more desperate, leading to an army that will hardly resemble the "crack" cohesive force necessary for the endless wars to maintain their dominance over rival capitalists. As will be seen below, possibly only a draft will supply the cannon fodder needed. But that will only create more opposition among masses of people already disgusted with Iraq and Afghanistan. The rulers' desperation is reflected in the following:

• The Army Reserves raised its maximum enlistment age from 35 to 42 and the regular Army upped its active-duty enlistment eligibility to 42.

• Next, ex-convicts: An army recruiter hanging around a Dallas-area job fair told the Houston Chronicle he was "looking for high-school graduates with no more than one felony on their record."

• Recruiting Nazis: The Southern Poverty Law Center reported "large numbers of neo-Nazis" in the military, quoting a Defense Dept. investigator that, "Recruiters are knowingly allowing neo-Nazis and white supremacists to join the armed forces, and commanders don't remove them…"

The neo-Nazi magazine "Resistance" is "urging skinheads to join the army and insist on being assigned to light-infantry units" in order to prepare for "The coming race war and ethnic cleansing" until "the alien races are driven into the countryside [to be] …hunted down…" (NY Times)

• The "back-door" draft: "Marine commanders have taken the extraordinary step of drafting back into uniform those who have left the ranks," the so-called Individual Ready Reserves (IRR). (Boston Globe) "Approximately 14,000 soldiers on IRR status have been called to active duty" by the Army. (CBS News)

• The Army's desperate need for officers has reached the bottom of the barrel in promoting captains: a high-ranking army officer told the LA Times, "Basically, if you haven't been court-martialed, you're going to be promoted to major."

• Hungry for re-enlistments: "Maximum bonuses [have] been raised to $60,000 for marine" re-enlistees in critical specialties. (Stars and Stripes newspaper) Additionally, there are "life-changing" bribes of promised benefits between $23,292 and $71,424 for active-duty and reserve personnel "to help pay for college" (if still alive when college comes around).✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead:" capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.

Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One International working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. **Join Us!**

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School 'Reform': Rulers Train Students for Exploitation and War

Working-class parents send their children to school to learn skills needed for productive lives. But the ruling class has other plans — to use the schools so they can more effectively exploit the lives of all workers. Control of the schools aims at creating racist and sexist divisions among young people. The rulers depend on these youth to create their profits and fight their imperialist battles.

Federal and state legislation forces curricula on teachers that emphasizes the nationalist ideas rulers hope will win students to fight for the U.S.

The smaller or charter schools, pushed in many cities, are another way for the rulers to win young people. When the principal knows their name, students may be convinced that such a school deserves their loyalty and trust. This can build a sense of all-class unity, that workers have more in common with bosses of their "race" or nationality than they have with other workers. Such loyalty wins U.S. workers to fight Iraqi workers on behalf of U.S. bosses, rather than uniting them with all workers to fight all bosses.

Meanwhile, the overcrowding, boredom and poor treatment students get at most schools can be converted into the discipline of the military life the rulers have in store for them. Because of the racism inherent in capitalism — super-profits to be made by paying black and Latin workers less — such students suffer in the worst schools, having the most metal detectors and the fewest books. As fascist conditions increase, more students find school to be a prison-like box through which they must pass on their way to unemployment, prison, the military or, if lucky, a job creating profits for a boss. The schools' testing and tracking systems enforce divisions among students and encourage them to believe they are to blame for their current and future roles in capitalist society.

Ruling-class representatives at every level claim to be "reforming" the school system. At state and national levels, this has meant legislating more testing for children, rebuilding districts on a "business" model and creating smaller, more easily-controlled schools. But despite the sunny rhetoric used by the proponents of these reforms, racist and fascist conditions still apply in most working-class schools. High school graduation rates are low enough for Education Week (6/22/06) to consider them a crisis. In this case "reform" doesn't mean that schools are being fixed to do



School or jail?

more for our working-class children. Rather, through mandatory testing and regimentation, schools are being reorganized for the ruling class to better "train" our children to become docile, willing to be exploited at work and sacrificed in ongoing oil wars.

We workers want our children to grow up with knowledge and skills. The ruling class fosters ideas that will lead them to use those skills for the profit and war-making needs of the capitalist class. As we fight for communism, our goal is for children to learn to think creatively and use their skills to build a worker-led society that's in THEIR class interest.✪

L.A. Workers Kick Racists Out of Labor Day Rally

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 5 — Union members and other workers showed their militant anti-racism here yesterday when they kicked the anti-immigrant Save Our State group out of the Labor Day celebration at Banning Park in Wilmington, a working-class area near the port of Long Beach.

While workers assembled to show their readiness to fight for economic justice for all, regardless of immigration status, the small Save Our State group shouted their anti-immigrant racial hatred. These racists say that immigrants are "taking over" the U.S. and "stealing citizens' jobs." But as one young black woman worker explained, "It's the government and the rich elite who are draining the U.S. economy. Their lies have caused hundreds of thousands of innocent workers to die fighting for [the bosses'] oil profits!"

The bosses' newspaper, the LA Times, ABC-TV Channel 7 and the Spanish TV misrepresented the Labor Day action when they proclaimed that "the police escorted the protesters…across the street…" Actually, when an ever-growing number of workers confronted the racists on a small hill near the edge of the park, the 10 or 12 Save Our State demonstrators needed police protection to keep from getting slaughtered.

Union leaders tried to divert the workers from attacking the racists, urging us to return to the nearby area where they and Democratic politicians were giving their Get-Out-the-Vote speeches. But young Latino men, organized for security by the Labor Day sponsors, refused and confronted the racists, blocked their advance and drowned out their shouting with pro-labor chants. When more and more workers discovered that Save Our State,

When more and more workers discovered that Save Our State, an organization closely allied with the fascist anti-immigrant Minutemen, had dared to bring their racist message to the rally, the crowd grew into hundreds, and pushed the racists down the hill toward the street.

an organization closely allied with the fascist anti-immigrant Minutemen, had dared to bring their racist message to the rally, the crowd grew into hundreds, and pushed the racists down the hill toward the street. No speeches by Democratic Party representatives and union officials could stop the workers from pushing these racists out of the park.

Progressive Labor Party members participated in expelling the anti-immigrant group, whose main interest was getting media attention. While the media wants immigrants to think that U.S. workers support nationalist groups like Save Our State and the Minutemen, CHALLENGE has reported the continuing militancy of U.S. workers who fight for the international working class. We join our brothers and sisters worldwide in the struggle against the growing fascism of capitalist rulers.

The workers saw through union leaders' efforts to prevent them from attacking open racists. With PLP leadership, they escape from the union leaders' dangerous trap of supporting the U.S. Senate's "lesser-evil" immigration bill. The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act — with six Republican sponsors and one Democrat (Kennedy) and backed by Bush —"promises" citizenship to immigrants if they agree to be docile, never complain or strike and fight in the bosses wars for profits. We must hit hard at the wolves in sheep's clothing (union and nationalist misleaders) who continue to support this legislation to win immigrant workers to die for the U.S. flag as "patriotic" citizens.✪

'From Oaxaca to LA, Workers Will Win!'

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 2 — Chanting "From Oaxaca to LA, the workers will win" ("Desde Oaxaca a LA, los obreros vencerán"), a group of workers and youth marched in the Labor Day Parade today carrying signs backing the teachers and their supporters in Oaxaca, Mexico. Several workers from Oaxaca excitedly joined us while others on the sidelines shouted our slogans.



Workers in Oaxaca

We made speeches to the crowd about the mass struggle of the teachers and other workers in Oaxaca against the government and the capitalist system. We called for international solidarity against the Mexican government's increasing attacks on the workers in which teachers and their supporters have been killed, arrested and kidnapped. This shows the true fascist nature of capitalism, whose goal is the exploitation of the working class. That's why workers need communist revolution to end this bosses' dictatorship.

We can combat these attacks by building PLP to put our class on the offensive. Many at this march bought CHALLENGE and eagerly took PLP leaflets which explained that revolution, not voting for "lesser-evil" politicians — as union hacks on both sides of the border ask workers to do — is the only answer to the bosses' war and fascist attacks.

Several activities are planned to spread support for our sisters and brothers in Oaxaca, one being a march of teachers, including PLP'ers.

INDIGENOUS WORKERS PROTEST ATTACKS IN OAXACA

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 16 — A coalition of indigenous workers, many from Oaxaca, marched to the Mexican Consulate here to demand an end to attacks on Oaxaca's teachers and their supporters. Almost everyone was glad to get CHALLENGE from a group of PL'ers who joined them. While some chants supported the liberal presidential candidate Andreas Manuel Lopez Obrador, there were lively discussions pointing out that no electoral party can change the nature of capitalism. Many wanted to stay in touch with the PL'ers about coming marches backing the Oaxaca strike and mass protests.✪

OAXACA TEACHERS REJECT SELLOUT

OAXACA, MEXICO — Striking teachers rejected sellout attempts by some leaders of the teachers union and the APPO (the mass group which has taken over the city) to end the strike which has been the backbone of the struggle. While the deal included a sizeable wage increase for the teachers (the demand that initially sparked the movement), the struggle has gone beyond that, now including political demands. So when leaders of the APPO and teachers union tried to sell the deal to the rank and file and end the strike, the sellouts were expelled from the assemblies. The teachers showed they won't be bought by some economic crumbs and that the struggle will continue, despite government threats to send in the Federal Police and the Army to take back the city.

We in PLP support the teachers and their allies. We're trying to move the fight-back more to the left, into a school for communism, beyond demanding the ouster of Oaxaca's fascist governor or to support Lopez Obrador in the dogfight among Mexican bosses. We aim to build the PLP and fight for a system where workers and their allies rule, which can only be achieved through communist revolution..✪

AFL-CIO Hacks Betray Detroit Teachers' Anti-Racist Strike

DETROIT, MI Sept. 15 - About 9,000 members of the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) returned to work, ending their 16-day strike against the Detroit Public School Board (DPS). On September 13, thousands of strikers packed Cobo Hall to hear the terms of a three-year contract. They voted to return while holding ratification votes at their schools.

The UAW and AFL-CIO leadership never mobilized an ounce of support for the strike, and the DFT never called them or the International leadership on it. In the end, the strikers had nowhere to go but back to work, never having mobilized the parents and students which could have greatly expanded the struggle. One poll reported pro-teacher sentiment at 72%.

Teachers chanted, "Books, Supplies and Lower Class Size!" on mass pickets surrounding Board offices They defied a court order to return to work, enjoying the overwhelming support of parents and the 130,000 students. (More than 50,000 students have left the system in the last five years.) Over 80% of the students are black and more than half live below the poverty line. Like NYC transit workers before them, the strike had an anti-racist character and was a breath of fresh air.

At one high school a male mentoring club had just returned from taking students to do volunteer work in New Orleans. During the strike they carried home-made signs criticizing the bloody occupation of Iraq instead of concentrating on cities like New Orleans and Detroit.

While the hundred of billions are spent on imperialist war in Iraq, Detroit reflects a system with nothing to offer black youth but prison or the military. The children of Vietnam vets feel no loyalty to the bosses and even less like killing and dieing for them. The bosses withhold money for public education, especially for black youth, but have endless tax breaks and subsidies for casinos and sports stadiums.

School CEO Walter Coleman, who makes $220,000 a year, and the Board demanded teachers take an 11% pay-cut over two years to fill a $105 million deficit with $89 million in concessions and threatened 2,000 layoffs if they didn't get them. Instead, the strikers settled on a pay freeze this school year, with "raises" of 1% in 2007-08 and 2.5% in 2008-09. Next year's raises will be the first since 2003. Teachers hired before 1992 will pay 10% of their health insurance costs as newer hires already do. And they will lose three days' pay for preparation days canceled by the strike.

Detroit may be the country's most segregated city, similar to Soweto in apartheid South Africa. The population has shrunk from almost two million in the early 1950's to less than 800,000. Newly-released U.S. Census figures show Detroit as the country's second most impoverished city. Thousands of vacant and crumbling homes stand like monuments to the decline of the U.S. auto industry, the collaboration of the union leaders with the bosses and the effect of the collapse of the old communist movement which has hurt workers'class consciousness worldwide. Detroit is a Katrina in slow motion, a victim of inter-imperialist competition among auto companies over the past 30 years.

Schools are old and in disrepair. School libraries are few, broken windows are many. At Miller Middle School, their new principal "welcomed" students back to their first day of school with police pat-downs and metal detectors. Michigan graduates only 30% of its black male students, and almost 80% of white males. In Detroit the numbers are even worse. The mostly Latino southwest side graduates about 13% of all students, black, Latin and white. There are few supplies and teachers spend tens of thousands of dollars from their own pockets for books, copies, paper, even toilet paper for their students.

But this battle is just one round in a long fight, and it has opened new doors to building PLP.✪



New Orleans Industrial Workers United vs. Racism

(Part II):

(Part I reviewed the united struggles of black and white workers after the Civil War.)

Now a new element had emerged — the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) which had begun organizing in New Orleans on an anti-racist, internationalist basis. They provided ideological leadership as well as organizational and material support. The modest growth of the organized Left in the 1907 dock strike was even more significant than the reform victory.

One white union leader — using the racist language of that era — described the change in his consciousness: "I fought in every strike to keep black labor off the dock. I fought until in the white-supremacy strike your white-supremacy governor sent his white-supremacy militia and shot us white-supremacy strikers full of holes.... There was a time when I wouldn't even work beside a n-----...You made me work with n-----s, … and finally got me to the point where if one of them ... blubbers something about more pay, I say, 'Come on, …let's go after the white bastards.'"

The lumber bosses tried to use black workers to break a 1910 strike by the Brotherhood of Timber Workers. Their racism backfired as the union integrated and then affiliated with the IWW, proclaiming that, "No longer will we allow the Southern oligarchy to divide and weaken us on lines of race, craft, religion, and nationality."

In Katrina's aftermath the bosses are again pushing racism in a thousand ways. As 19th century bosses tried to use the super-exploitation of black workers to "divide and conquer," today's rulers similarly pit immigrant against black workers. New Orleans remains a mainly working-class city (see box). Once again we need to organize as one united working class — this time, for communist revolution.

After the Russian Revolution, many IWW members rejected the anarcho-syndicalism of their early years and became communists. (The IWW thought that seizure of the factories and proclaiming the "workers republic" in itself would create the revolution, neglecting to advance the necessity for the working class to smash the rulers' state power.)

In 1921, the Communist Party USA was launched. The Progressive Labor Party has learned much from the victories, and more from the weaknesses, of that communist movement. We fight for black and Latin workers to take the lead in organizing multi-racial class struggle, and also — most importantly — in winning workers, students and soldiers to our Party with the goal of smashing the bosses' state. Millions of workers already know that capitalism can't be reformed to meet our needs. When these workers take communism to heart, we can abolish the racist wage system and build a new society based on the principle, "from each according to commitment — to each according to need."

(See Eric Arnesen, "Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class and Politics, 1863-1923"; (1991), though his analysis differs from PLP's.)✪

New Orleans Today: Not Just A Tourist Destination

The Port of New Orleans remains central to the economy of the city and the nation. In 2003 it handled an annual average of 11.4 million tons of general cargo. Its 28 million square feet of facilities included a new state-of-the-art container terminal. Although containerization and automation have slashed the workforce, in 2003 the port still accounted for 107,000 jobs, $2 billion in earnings and $231 million in tax revenue. Meanwhile, one-fourth of all U.S. oil production is based in the Gulf of Mexico. Louisiana's offshore oil and gas industries generate $5 billion in annual federal revenues.

The bosses need this oil industry and this port to carry out their plans for rebuilding their military and preparing for broader imperialist war. Repairing the damage done to these facilities by Katrina is much more important to them than fixing workers' neighborhoods, or even gentrifying downtown. We must organize New Orleans' industrial workers — black, Latino, Asian and white — to fight the bosses and their bloody war plans. ✪

Capitalist Weapons of Mass Destruction

WATER TERRORISM

(Editor's note: With this issue we begin a feature that exposes the innumerable weapons of mass destruction generated by the profit system. We invite our readers to contribute material for this box. Please limit your submission to 150 words.)

Every year two and one-half million people die worldwide from polluted water or a lack of water. As pointed out on the radio program "To the Point" (WNYC-NY, 8/25), this is truly a weapon of mass destruction. Capitalists are not only rapidly privatizing water supplies and reaping millions in profits (especially in Latin America) but they're fighting over the supplies, from the Mid-East to the Western U.S. Some predict such conflicts could lead to war.

As the above program reported, one-third of the world's population — two billion people — live with too little water.

Combine capitalism's profit motive with its planlessness, and you have a prescription for a crisis which mostly affects the poorest workers on every continent. It will take communism — when profits, bosses and exploitation are eliminated — that will plan to distribute this most vital resource unpolluted, according to need.✪



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War and More War on the Agenda

Political Battle Emerging in Mass Organizations

(Part II of 3-part series. Part I reviewed the liberals' call for strategic "redeployment" — a tactical retreat from Iraq to regroup for bigger and bloodier wars to protect the U.S. bosses' increasingly challenged grip on Mid-East oil.)

Recently, a friend at work told me he was alarmed at reports that China had leapt 30 years ahead by "stealing" U.S. military secrets. Naturally, we discussed this propaganda about "stealing," but it started me thinking. Not too long ago every "expert" predicted the U.S. wouldn't have to worry about China for at least 50 years. Let's see: 50 minus 30 equal 20. That's not too far away!

A bipartisan roundtable of industry leaders, the Pentagon and leading foreign policy strategists — hosted by the International Association of Machinists (IAM), a key industrial union — condenses the timeline. They worry that in seven years, 15 at most, the U.S. will not have the surge war manufacturing capacity to meet a challenge from a "near peer competitor." That's Pentagon-speak for Russia and/or China, with tacit support from some European nations. They will issue a completed report as the next president takes office. Meanwhile, every IAM local and district is pushing this roundtable's formula for class collaboration backing U.S. imperialism.

Nobody can predict the timeline with absolute certainty. Nonetheless, the bosses are sufficiently worried that they've decided to move this debate from the private think-tanks and government offices to the general public. We can expect the ruling class to use every tool at its disposal to galvanize political support for its broader imperialist plans: including the government, laws, media and culture. In this battle for the "hearts and minds" of the working class, the various mass organizations and unions are key battlegrounds.

Using organizational models like the anti-communist Americans for Democratic Action (discussed last issue), the bosses aim to enlist prominent reform organizations in their campaign for broader political acceptance of bigger bloodier wars — up to and including world war. Their new liberalism envisions a network of union, church, immigration, student and soldier groups and nationalist movements promising "positive" reform of capitalism, but delivering patriotism and imperialist war. They want this network to corral any opposition should the working class start to mount any serious anti-imperialist resistance — particularly if inspired by communist class-consciousness.

Fight Bosses Ideology

The IAM's sponsorship of the "Surge Roundtable" is but one example. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) just announced support of Israeli butchery in Lebanon. The "pro-immigrant" organizations support the Senate immigration bill providing virtual slave labor for the arms factories and new recruits for the armed forces. Even anti-war groups among soldiers and their families offer Lt. Watada as an example to follow. He refused go to Iraq, but volunteered to serve U.S. imperialism anywhere else, including Afghanistan. The list of betrayals grows every day.

We avoid confronting the groundwork being laid in mass organizations for bigger imperialist war at our class's peril. To date, we've been fairly good at linking the billion-dollar cost of the Iraq war to cutbacks for workers. But the preparation for war goes deeper. We must confront the *political* preparation of the working class and the ideological attack included in that preparation. Racism and nationalism are key weapons in the bosses' arsenal, setting us up to attack other workers. There have been increased attempts to split black from Latin workers, two groups that can provide leadership to the whole working class. Building a base to challenge the "new liberal" leadership in the mass organizations on the questions of racism, nationalism and ideological support for U.S. imperialism is the order of the day.✪

Racist Reign of Terror At Chicago Hospitals

CHICAGO, IL, September 11 — Racist and fascist terror are on the rise for workers at Stroger Hospital, the CORE Center and throughout the Cook County Health Bureau. Today 75-year old Augustin Sotomayor, a recent stroke victim, was dragged from his car by Stroger cops. He was waiting to pick up his wife who works at the CORE Center, across the street from Stroger Hospital.

Augustin's wife Manuela has worked for the County for eight years. Many other workers, patients and visitors witnessed her husband being beaten and thrown to the ground by two black hospital cops after they asked him if he "was Mexican" and if he was "legal." While hospitalized at Stroger, he was charged with "resisting arrest" and "battery"!

Cook County security, like the Chicago police, is off the leash. A few months ago, a black female ward clerk with 10 years on the job was dragged off an elevator and to the security office at the other end of the hospital. Her child was waiting in the car while she picked up her paycheck. The cop claimed he "couldn't see her ID badge," which she was wearing.

In another incident, a black female nurse was attacked by security and dragged to their lock-up while she was getting her paycheck. Both black women were given suspensions by the racist Stroger bosses. If the unions had organized mass protests and job actions supporting these women, Augustin might not have been attacked.

Racist terror on and off the job is aimed at intimidating workers into accepting rotten jobs and a future of endless wars and growing poverty. In the past six months, a retired Chicago police commander was found guilty of torturing defendants into confessions. Yet he continues living comfortably, retired on his city pension because it happened "too long ago" to punish! A 14-year-old black youth was recently shot by the cops in the Cabrini Green housing project for "holding a B-B-gun." Last week, four cops in the Special Operations unit were indicted for breaking into homes, kidnapping and robbery. This week, a Latino family sued the city after the cops shot their son 16 times last year, killing him. There are countless other examples, large and small.

Meanwhile, the County and the SEIU are trying to secure a contract based on a racist war budget that will leave black and Latin workers further behind. Over 80,000 jobs and as many as 40 plants will be eliminated as GM, Ford and Delphi retreat in the face of increasing competition. And the Iraq war, already lost, continues to deteriorate and spread.

The only way out of this mess is building a base for PLP and communist revolution. As we fight every attack, our ties to the workers will deepen and the political struggle can sharpen.✪



Liberals' Vote Ploy Masks Plan to Win Immigrants to War-Fascism Agenda

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 17 — The efforts of mass organizations to win workers' support for the liberal bosses' plans for war and fascism are becoming broader, more crucial and active. The main slogan of a five-day "National Latino Congress" here — Sept. 6-10 — was "March Today, Vote Tomorrow."

Speakers included Latino/a elected officials — LA's Mayor, corporation heads and union leaders like Linda Chavez Thompson, AFL-CIO V-P, Mary Elena Durazo, LA County Federation of Labor president and Nativo Lopez of the Mexican-American Political Association. This Congress's neo-liberal leaders are organizing an all-out campaign to win workers and youth to elect Democrats to Congress, and push the Senate's Comprehensive Immigration Bill (see Labor Day article, page 3), the message being that Democrats will pass laws putting more immigrants on the "path to legalization."

The Conference leadership said now is the time to show "We are America " by getting out the vote, not the time to march. Their "path to legalization" is designed to create a docile workforce and a patriotic military. It's part of the bosses' plans for building fascism.

They're also saying that workers should join unions to achieve "the American Dream." Tiny wage increases (being eaten up by inflation and rising health care costs) were touted as big victories, while union leaders bragged that these reform fights make them the best-equipped to turn out Latino voters.

This conference is part of a carefully thought-out strategy to win us to fascism using a liberal cover. This strategy, outlined by the liberal think-tank Brookings Institution in "United We Serve," stems from U.S. imperialism's need to mobilize immigrant workers and their children to believe in and fight for that "American Dream." It was advanced in a paper entitled "National Security and Immigration Policy," created by a task force on immigration that began meeting shortly after 9/11. It was initiated by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. They met with "counter-terrorism" experts to reform the U.S. Immigration System to further the nation's "security." They included current and former top officials of the FBI, CIA, National Security Agency, the Council on Foreign Relations and the Hart-Rudman Commission.

Their report examines the need to win immigrants to give information to the government; to greatly increase quotas for both skilled and unskilled workers; the importance of immigrants serving in the military; and the value of "Allowing the undocumented to secure drivers' licenses [which]…registers them in what is effectively the nation's largest law enforcement database" (p. 45) — an important screening tool.

The report asserts that if the government legalizes "those who are here and are coming here for valid purposes, we can concentrate law enforcement resources on the few bad actors." This document emphasizes the need for comprehensive immigration "reform," and reflects U.S. rulers' needs to both win over and control immigrant workers and their offspring.

These ruthless U.S. imperialists and their agents who are trying to win workers' support for wider imperialist war and exploitation in the production of weapons are wolves in sheep's clothing. They are the enemy of the working class. Voting for one or another "lesser-evil" capitalist politician who backs bosses' wars aims to lock us into these murderers' plans. They must be combated by workers united around a clear understanding of this enemy and the need for revolution.

PLP will participate in these movements to expose the bosses' plans and win masses of workers to oppose these neo-liberal imperialists with a mass movement of workers, students and soldiers fighting for power and a communist world.✪

'Katrina' Sweeps Ford

continued from front page

the beginning of national contract talks for Ford, GM and DaimlerChrysler. The bosses and their loyal UAW junior partners will have plenty more cuts to make then.

David Cole, director of the Center for Automotive Research, said Ford must also cut health care costs and supported reopening local contracts. Those locals surrendering the most will supposedly keep working. This is known as "whip-sawing" one local against another. Cole said this gives Ford "more flexibility" and makes a "huge impact on the cost structure."

On September 9, UAW Local 600 at Ford's Dearborn complex voted 2-to-1 in favor of a "competitive operating agreement" that will outsource non-production jobs, enforce a severe attendance policy, allow the use of temporary workers and replace the 8-hour day with four 10-hour days. Workers were told that if the contract was rejected the company would move production to other plants. Local 600 President Jerry Sullivan said, "We're trying to be as cost-competitive as possible."

A similar contract was accepted by UAW Local 588 at the Ford Stamping plant in Chicago Heights. One worker said, "It's really weird. Fights and complaints [against Ford] are way down. I've never seen it like this. People are worried whether they will have a job."

One worker at the Ford Assembly plant in Chicago, UAW Local 551, described three older white local union leaders "counseling" 25 young laid-off black workers. This underlines the inherent racism in these attacks, which hit black and Latin workers first and hardest.

This onslaught shows that capitalism can never meet the needs of the workers; whatever you win is fleeting as long as the bosses rule. We need to seize all the factories and mills and smash the bosses' state with communist revolution and produce for the needs of our class. Over the next year we will build PLP in the auto industry as the main way to prepare for the coming struggle, and to honor the heroes of the 1967 Rebellion.✪

Ex-Boeing Hitman Targets Ford Workers

"The United States has no divine right to our standard of living. That's what we believe in. That's capitalism." (Tacoma News-Tribune, 7/3/2002) Those are the words of Alan Mulally the new president and CEO of Ford. He was justifying firing 50,000 aerospace workers and selling factories to low-wage producers as Boeing's chief of Commercial Airplanes. Apparently, the "standard of living" thing doesn't apply to him. He gets $18.5 million up front, $2 million in salary, four million in stock options and 600,000 restricted stock units.

After Mulally's first Ford board meeting, the company upped to 16 the number of plants on the chopping block. And you thought things couldn't get any worse!

Richard Gephardt, formerly the UAW's favorite Democratic Congressman, urged Mulally to take this job, "for the good of the country." In return, Mulally appointed Gephardt to the board of Spirit AeroSystems, the new owners of the former Boeing Wichita plant.

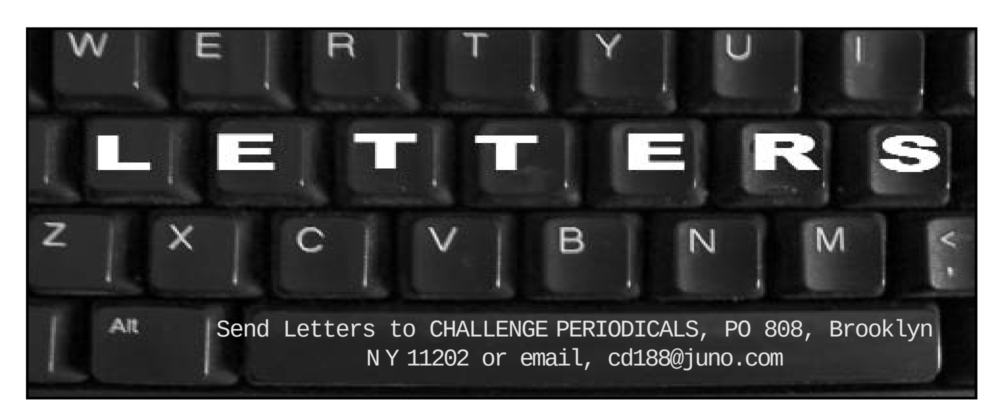
Spirit fired 1,300 Boeing workers when it bought the plant, reduced wages 10%, hired new workers at even lower rates and reduced pensions and medical benefits. Mulally threatened to "take the division apart" if the unions did not agree to these cutbacks.

He blackmailed Washington State into $3.2 billion in corporate tax breaks to retain the 787 jet assembly. Black workers were hit hardest when he slashed the blue-collar work force and then he pressured the state to cut (mostly Latin) farm workers' unemployment benefits and gut workers' compensation to finance this tax-break. He moved lower-paid subcontractors into the assembly plants and moved more work overseas or to new domestic subcontractors, often former Boeing plants.

Throughout this attack, Mullally said the International Association of Machinists (IAM) was "absolutely aligned and attuned" to the bosses' plans. "We're looking at being partners in creating value — or adversaries…fighting over an ever-shrinking pie," warned IAM strategic-resources director Steve Sleigh. (Business Week, 8/08/2002)

As Ford CEO, Mulally made his first call to UAW President Ron Gettelfinger, who called him "a great choice." The UAW has some Boeing workers and the two have conspired against them in the past.

The racist rulers plan to cut auto workers' wages and benefits to boost profits and to keep war production at home. Changing exploiters at the top only takes us from the frying pan into the fire. The change we need is a change in systems. We don't need new bosses; we need communist revolution!✪



Honor Marx and 'Internationale'

Highgate is a village on the northern edge of London. Karl Marx was buried in Highgate Cemetery. This summer our family of seven stopped to visit Karl. Four of us stood by the grave with our fists raised and sang The Internationale in English, Spanish and poor French. People walking by heard us and made these comments:

"It's wonderful to see real communists singing The Internationale," said a middle-aged German man. "It is sad that communism has died." We assured him that, just as history has not ended, neither has the struggle for communism. He seemed surprised at our answer and brightened.

Near Marx's grave many revolutionaries, communists and others — some exiled from their homelands — are also buried. While we were singing, two elderly ladies who were looking at the moving inscriptions on the gravestones circled around and then returned the same way to continue to listen to our singing. They seemed very happy and walked off arm in arm.

A young Chinese couple carrying a bouquet of flowers stopped when they heard us singing The Internationale for the second or third time. They asked if they could take a picture with us — being photographed with a communist at Marx's grave was what they wanted. They were very excited and said they would show the photos to everyone. They had promised their father they would place flowers on Marx's grave while in London. They asked us to visit China.

Others didn't come as close, but stood, listened and watched. Nowhere was there an angry face. From this experience it seemed the ideas of Marx and Lenin are very much alive.

The following day two of us visited an ex-miner and his wife in the county of Kent. During the 1984-85 coal strike they had come to the U.S. He's now a construction worker. He said he always sings on the job. When he sings The Internationale, he's always asked to repeat it and the other workers always join in. Most recently this happened with a Ukrainian worker, singing together right there on the construction site. He said to us that if things started popping again, he'd jump right into the battle.

In the past, The Internationale and communists made a difference in the world, and will make a difference in the future.

AN EX-LONDONER

Afghan Women Fight U.S. Bosses, Warlords

The Sept 9th assassination of Hakim Taniwal governor, of the southeastern province of Paktia, recalls Afghanistan's bitter past while exposing its shattered present. This is a country whose infrastructure has been destroyed by 30 years of war and is ruled by U.S. imperialists and their warlord allies, many of whom are government officials. Corruption is rife, fed by U.S. dollars and the drug trade (Afghanistan supplies 87% of the world's heroin). Private militias outnumber the national army; kidnappings and extortions are commonplace. Women suffer extreme subjugation at the hands of the fascist fundamentalists who control all aspects of life. The resurgence of the Taliban has only worsened the situation for the oppressed population.

Yet amid such horrific conditions, working people are fighting back. Hakim Taniwal, who was assassinated by a Taliban suicide bomber, was a progressive voice in the current Karzai government. He had been a sociology professor at the University of Kabul, with close ties to the leftist government that ruled from 1979 to 1992. He left Afghanistan in 1996 when the fundamentalists came to power. He found asylum in Australia, but retained some of the ideas from his past of working for a more equitable society. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, he returned to help rebuild the country. He was a down-to-earth man known for his honesty who tried to better the lives of the people, challenging the corruption — reasons why he was singled out and murdered

Much of the fight-back today is led by militant women who risk their lives simply for opening schools for girls. Still they carry on, helping their sisters — 90% of whom are illiterate — learn to read and write, acquire skills and inspire them to rise up against the horrors inherent in the profit-driven system of capitalism that are so starkly visible in Afghanistan.

Workers everywhere should support the people opposing that system.

AN AFGHAN FRIEND

CHALLENGE comment: We stand in solidarity with those militant women who are fighting against the U.S. imperialist and fascist fundamentalist oppressors of the workers and farmers of Afghanistan. Imperialism and fundamentalism are part of capitalism and cannot be reformed. The Karzai government represents that system. The government that ruled the country from '79 to '92 was allied with the Soviet regime, which decades before became state-capitalist.

Harvard Terrorist Would Nuke Millions

If anyone doubts that cleanly-groomed Harvard-type men and women would hesitate to murder millions of workers, think again. An opinion column appeared in my local newspaper written by Harvey Simon, "a former Harvard University national security analyst."

Simon says (no children's game) that politicians and the military must decide whether to continue the old Cold War approach with countries like North Korea that won't be deterred by threatened U.S. nuclear retaliation. It may not work, says Simon, because heads of those states "may refuse to believe the United States would kill millions in retaliation." Simon clearly thinks that killing millions of innocent civilians with nuclear war is just another day at the park.

He explains that, "The traditional theory of nuclear deterrence was grounded in the World War II era, when civilian populations were bombed without mercy." In an apparent oversight, Simon neglects to mention that only Germany, Japan, the U.S. and Britain bombed civilian populations without mercy; the Soviet Union never engaged in such genocide against workers.

Simon goes on: "The Second Cold War, however, arrives at a time when precision strikes that minimize 'collateral damage' are considered politically necessary. U.S. war planners must consider whether they can any longer plausibly threaten to kill millions, if not tens of millions, of innocent people. And if they can't they'll have to find new ways to keep the peace." It's all the same to Simon — the politicians and generals should make up their minds.

The media uses the term "terrorist" only for those who kill tens, hundreds or thousands of innocent people. For those who would kill millions, the proper term is apparently "former Harvard University national security analyst." Or "president," or "senator," or "congressman/woman."

SAGUARO ROJO

No Racist Survivors

On September 14, the CBS-TV "reality show" Survivor was beginning a season with segregated teams of Asians, Latinos, blacks and whites competing against each other. Many anti-racist people and organizations are protesting, hoping CBS will cancel this racist trash. PLP members are among them, organizing in churches and unions against this racism.

Past episodes of Survivor were anti-working class, sexist and just plain stupid, promoting individualism. But now the TV bosses are pushing something even more dangerous since their system is in trouble and their economy is facing challenges from their imperialist rivals. Because the bosses cannot give workers jobs and vital services, they want to use racism to divide and rule. They're pushing racist shows and movies in pop culture so we don't unite and fight back.

For example, there's a racist — stereotyping the people of Kazhastan — and anti-Semitic "comedy" movie staring Sasha Cohen of Ali G. fame. Cable station VH-1 has a racist "reality" show starring William Drayton (formerly of Public Enemy).

At the airport where I work, U.S. and Ethiopian workers have circulated an anti-racist union resolution attacking Survivors' executive producers and writers as racist. Our resolution was sent to the local CBS affiliate and CBS headquarters in NYC.

While Survivor presents nothing specifically related to our jobs, workers live in a bigger world, not in a cultural vacuum. We're struggling politically with workers for multi-racial unity, pointing out how CBS is insulting the memory of fighters like John Brown, Harriet Tubman and Lucy Parsons. The only solution to the racist bosses' TV and culture is uniting all workers to fight for a communist revolution. When we cancel the bosses, there'll be no survivors.

AIRPORT RED

Young Industrial Workers Take Leadership of West Coast PL School

"I've learned a lot about leadership in preparing for this school. Communist leadership is about building more such leaders by example and providing opportunities for others to step forward," declared one young industrial worker of his experience preparing for PL's recent West Coast two-day school. "I wanted to keep discussing dialectics all day," said another.

This school was very positive for everyone. It helped our young industrial workers better understand their responsibilities as Party leaders, deepened and reinforced everyone's understanding of dialectics, and demonstrated our Party's commitment to building for communist revolution among this vital group: the industrial working class.

A club of young industrial workers that had never been given such a big responsibility organized this effort. At times they felt overwhelmed, spending too much time on logistics and not enough concentrating on bringing co-workers to the conference. More could have been brought, causing these young leaders to analyze their relationships with their friends. Yet ultimately, collective struggle brought the club members closer together as they demonstrated their commitment to building the Party among the industrial working class.

A young comrade opened the school with an in-depth report on the world situation and also described his efforts inside and outside the factories. He stressed creativity in bringing communist politics to industrial workers, relating it to whatever interests them; building relationships on and off the job, saying these workers will eventually lead us to other workers. This has helped him expand his CHALLENGE network among his co-workers, their families and their friends.

A presentation on dialectics was a good introduction for some as well as a chance for others to sharpen its application. More time could have given everyone more of an opportunity to struggle over these ideas.

The next day a veteran PL'er gave a great report on immigration "reform" and its relation to imperialist war. He explained how the bosses need to mobilize millions of immigrants and their children to fill the military and war industries and that the ruling class's liberal wing is leading this effort through immigration "reform": building a "green-card army."

Another veteran PL'er described the bosses' and their union lackeys' push to prepare for more imperialist war by rebuilding the rulers' war-manufacturing capacity, forcing long hours and low wages on jobs in the needed skills and moving these workers into war plants.

The presence of Party and veteran industrial leaders reinforced the young comrades' belief that PLP recognizes the vital role industrial workers must play in the struggle for communist revolution. The article "Armed Insurrection" describes how Russian industrial workers produced the weapons for — and filled the ranks of — the army in the fight against Nazi Germany in World War II. In 1968 in France, while students initiated an extremely militant movement, it became much more powerful once the industrial working class shut down the country. No wonder the U.S. ruling class feels the need to snare millions of workers into producing and dying for U.S. imperialism.

The current situation presents great opportunities and places a great responsibility in our hands: to build a base for communism among those workers with the power to stop capitalism dead in it's tracks. In response to that, one young comrade concluded, "Well, we have about 40 to 50 years of organizing left in us so we should be able to get much better at this stuff." With more experience and struggle we will develop more young leaders with the same commitment to transform workers influenced by capitalist ideas into strong fighters for communism.✪

REMEMBERING COMRADE FLOYD CRAWFORD

(The following are excerpts from a eulogy by a PLP member delivered at the funeral service for Floyd Crawford, who died on September 3, 2006.)

I met Floyd about 24 years ago. Floyd was not what one would call a "big talker," but through the years we discovered that this appearance of a quiet person masked the essence of someone who had lived for three quarters of a century and from that experience knew a lot more than one gleaned from first glance. We both had lived through and shared some of the same historical events, the Great Depression, wars and the like. [Floyd was drafted near the end of the Korean War, into the Army Air Force.]

Floyd was never much of a dancer while my wife Esther was terrific on that score, but when we were at the same affair together, Floyd would nevertheless ask my wife to get out on the floor with him.

We knew Floyd best as a proofreader of DESAFIO. Somehow Floyd had managed to teach himself Spanish. So when we asked him to help out by proofreading DESAFIO, he was happy to volunteer.

For the better part of the last 20 years, Floyd would come from his home in Garfield, NJ, all the way to our NYC office on Tuesdays, the day before we went to press, by which time nearly all the Spanish translations would be ready. Floyd would be there right on time, like clockwork, spending all day examining every minute detail of the Spanish.

Floyd didn't merely spot typos or misspellings. Often he would challenge the meaning of an article's translation, if he felt it didn't correspond to the English version. He understood many of the nuances of the language. This was all the more remarkable because the bulk of the translating was done by our editor whose native language was Spanish, as was true of our other translators around the country.

Floyd would often catch an historical — or even geographical — error involving events he had lived through. So because of Floyd's efforts, our paper was much more readable in Spanish and somewhat more historically accurate in both languages.

Year after year Floyd attended our May Day marches as well, and made generous financial contributions to our Party. On Tuesdays, he would always treat the CHALLENGE staff to lunch. Floyd and I usually shared a meal (we didn't eat as much as the young ones) and he would invariably first ask me to choose the part of the chicken I wanted, to go with the rice and beans.

Floyd always seemed conscious of his health and what he ate, so much so that one of our members, a nurse, said she was jealous of his discipline when it came to food. So it was somewhat ironic that when we began to notice something was wrong with him physically, he would slough it off, saying he was O.K. He resisted our efforts to convince him to seek medical help. I think it was finally his dentist — who witnessed this deterioration from visit to visit — who persuaded him to have his condition diagnosed.

Floyd's contribution reminds me of a scene in the movie "The Seventh Cross." Spencer Tracy played an escapee from a Nazi concentration camp, and was hiding out with the help of others. An old waiter from a delicatessen comes to deliver his food. Hidden beneath a sandwich are some forged papers to help get him out of Germany. Tracy was overcome, that the old man would risk his life to help someone he had never met. So the old man told Tracy this story.

He was filling the sugar bowl at the tables in the restaurant when he accidentally spilled some. Along came hundreds of ants, each one seizing just one grain of sugar to move it to a safe haven. The old man watched in amazement when soon the entire pile of sugar had been moved, one grain and one ant at a time, to another spot.

The old man told Tracy that one ant could never have accomplished that feat by itself, but each one, playing its role together with all the rest, was able to complete the task. And that was how the old man viewed his small role in helping Tracy to escape and carry on the anti-Nazi resistance.

Floyd carrying a banner on May Day 2005

Floyd, like all of us, made a seemingly small but consistent contribution to producing our paper and reaching tens of thousands with our communist ideas. Without each one of us contributing to the "whole," we can never produce that "whole." Truly, what each one of us does, counts.

We must always remember Floyd in this light, as a dear comrade who never failed to do his part in making that "whole" greater than the sum of its parts.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT = New York Times, GW Guardian Weekly (UK) FT = Finacial Times



Pols sabotage New Orleans black workers

Douglas Brinkley, Tulane University historian who wrote the best selling account of "Katrina, The Great Deluge," is worried that even now the White House is escaping questioning about what it is up to (and not) in the Gulf. "I don't think anybody's getting the Bush strategy," he said when we talked last week. "The crucial point in that the inaction is deliberate—the inaction is the action." As he sees it, the administration, tacitly abetted by New Orleans' opportunistic mayor, Ray Nagin, is encouraging selective inertia, whether in the rebuilding of the levees ("Only Band-Aids have been put on them"), the rebuilding of the lower 9th Ward or the restoration of the wetlands. The destination: a smaller city, with a large portion of its former black population permanently dispersed. (NYT, 8/26)

Job cut is too small, says Wall Street

Intel, the world's largest chip maker….will reduce its work force by 10 percent and cut $5 billion in costs….

But its shares declined in extended trading as Wall Street digested the news that the job reductions were not as large as many had expected. Intel said it would cut 10,500 jobs… (NYT, 9/6)

Most workers get no layoff insurance

Currently, because of tight state eligibility requirements and because a growing number of workers do not have long-term, full-time jobs, unemployment insurance is paid to just over a third of those who are laid off, government data show and coverage is less likely among the lower-income workers who most need it. (NYT, 9/14)

Goering showed the way on Iraq war

Reichmarshall Hermann Goering articulated the…strategy during his 1946 Nuremburg war crimes trial. "Naturally, the common people don't want war," he said. "…(But) the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to a danger. It works the same way in any country." (Gene Lyons, Ark. Democrat-Gazette, 9/4)

Hooking kids and African Americans on nicotine

The amount of nicotine in most cigarettes rose an average of almost 10% from 1998 to 2004, with brands most popular with young people and minorities registering the biggest increases and highest nicotine content, according to a study.

Nicotine is highly addictive, and…the higher levels theoretically could make new smokers more easily addicted and make it harder for established smokers to quit….

Boxes of Doral Lights, a low-tar brand made by RJ Reynolds, had the biggest increase in yield, 36%....Kool lights increased 30%. Two-thirds of African American smokers use menthol brands. (GW, 9/14)

All presidents talk nice, then make war

George W. Bush is not the first president to lead us into war with less than the truth, if not outright lying….

President William McKinley in his war to seize the Philippines said he had heard "the voice of God" and "there was nothing left for us to do but take them all and educate the Filipinos, and uplift and Christianize them." We need do little more than substitute "democratize" for "Christianize" all the world, regardless of the method used….

Woodrow Wilson, after campaigning on the slogan, "He kept us out of the war," lost little time in asking Congress for a declaration of war after his inauguration of a second term.

…Franklin D. Roosevelt…maneuver[ed] this country into…action, despite such re-election statements as, "I have said it before, but I shall say it again and again. Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars."

…Lyndon Johnson…calling himself the peace candidate,…assured us, "We are not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves?" Never mind, we lost 58,000 disproving that one. (Gade Gusch, Liberal Opinion Week)

US putting freedom on back burner

Officially, the…administration is undaunted. Unofficially, it is shelving the "freedom agenda". This month Mr. Bush is expected to extend a warm White House welcome to Nursultan Nazarbayev, the president of Kazakhstan, who has banned opposition parties and muzzled the press – but who runs a strategically placed, oil-rich country. The Saudi and Egyptian governments are once again being treated as key allies…. (FT, 9/5)

'FIGHT CLUB' TEACHES POLITICS OF DEFEAT

Our PLP club has some youth around it and has just restarted our "movie day," watching an important/popular Hollywood film and then analyzing it using communist politics. We selected the influential 1999 film "Fight Club."

We first reviewed the origin of the book on which the film was based and then discussed the film's cultural importance. Author Chuck Palahniuk interviewed men in bars, asking them how they viewed the world and their place in it. The end result was "Fight Club."

We soon discovered that the film, which stays very true to the book, had a more profound impact on the men in the group than on the women. We discussed how the movie is essentially a boy's fantasy simply acted out by adults. We noted how both we and people we knew had watched this film dozens of times over the years and how it had affected our lives.

Our most humorous reaction was the realization that after the movie was released, every high school in the country must have had its own fight club. Understanding the film's importance and lasting impact led to a serious discussion about a film that otherwise might have been dismissed as a simple pop culture artifact of the '90's.

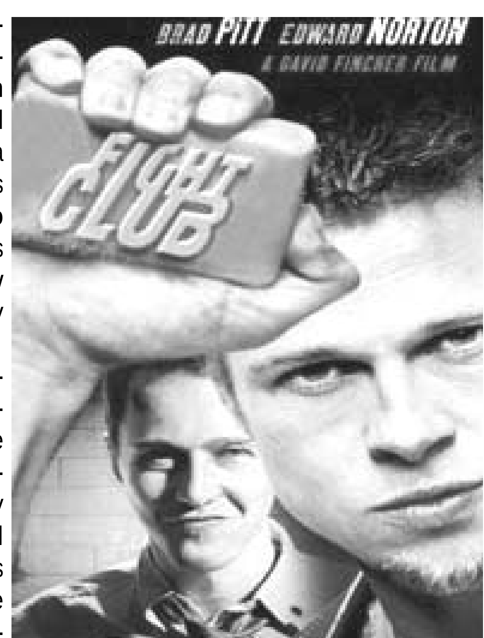
Taking a balanced approach, we first noted what the film got right. This sparked an analysis of worker alienation in society and its causes. This particular theme is well-portrayed. It inspired a review of the structure and nature of capitalism, how it alienates workers from their labor, leaving a hole to be filled with empty consumerism.

Then someone pointed out the irony of a major motion picture selling for twenty bucks (if you're lucky) discussing the emptiness of consumer culture. Although seemingly a silly comment to break the seriousness of the moment, it later provided a basis to ask, "If this film is so revolutionary, why did capitalist culture-makers release it?"

Outlining what went right in the film prepared us for the much longer discussion about what went wrong. Re-capping the earlier themes of the book's creation led to considering the movie's sexism, and then sexism in society as a whole. One PL'er explained that no revolution will get very far when it excludes half the population.

The film's sexist ideas are perfectly captured in the line, "We are a generation of men raised by women; I wonder if another woman is really what we need." This provoked an examination of how the film mirrors sexism in the real world.

The evening's longest conversation centered on the film's anarchist messages and its Great Man Theory — whether individuals led people to change through great spectacles or whether mass organizations created change through study, discussion and action. The debate on whether political meaning can be derived from single random acts, like smashing a coffee house, was a heated one. PLP'ers noted how actions devoid of context do not move people because the action has no inherent politics. We considered how mass movements win people over slowly through political struggle.



A PL member then analyzed the difference between communism and anarchism (the two main outlooks among the viewers). Anarchists believe political consciousness appears spontaneously whereas communists believe political consciousness and revolutionary ideas must be worked on and refined. While this debate might not have moved everybody to join PLP, it did move people further left as they realized the limitations of anarchism.

After spontaneity was refuted, everyone was ready to attack the film's Great Man theory. The idea that individuals, rather than mass organizations, create social change was thoroughly discredited, leading to examining capitalist individualism, something we all must struggle with daily.

Finally we returned to asking, "If this film is so revolutionary, why did capitalist culture-makers release it?" The answer was that the movie is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It used people's identification with the emptiness of capitalism and worker alienation to teach the politics of defeat. The film's core lessons are that sexism and mindless violence are good, and that organizing, study, discussion and collective action are bad. If we take this film's advice and refuse to develop our politics — hoping some great action will develop them for us — and rely on a "great leader" to rescue us rather than fight to develop the collective power of the working class, then we will truly be lost.

Lumber Bosses and Their Government Destroy the Environment and Jobs

BITTERROOT VALLEY, MONTANA — This Valley in western Montana is considered a "high desert" land, making wildfires inevitable during the summer months. These fires endanger rural workers and the environment surrounding them. This danger exists mostly due to the bosses' quest for profit by manipulating previously-burned forest lands.

The late summer of 2000 was a tremendous wildfire season here, burning more than 300,000 acres throughout this Valley alone. The vast majority of burned areas were prone to fire because of high levels of road-building and logging during the previous 40 years, mostly because of timber-industry development. Much of the 300,000 acres was previously clear cut by Darby Lumber Co., the majority of it approximately ten miles from nearby communities.

To protect the company and cover its own faults, the U.S. Forest Service has introduced — and is using propaganda to promote — the "re-burn" theory, that has yet to be scientifically proven. This theory says trees burned by fires in the past would fall down and create conditions for "catastrophic" fires. It created an excuse for Darby and other companies to profit from removing fallen timber from the forest. All this while suggesting their logging is "saving" both the forests and the rural communities around them from these fires, making it appear that they and the Forest Service are protecting the people's best interests.

However, according to scientists there's no evidence that fallen or decaying trees pose a higher risk of burning than standing ones. In fact, evidence points to the opposite: logging burned areas increases the risk of fires, and the rate at which they spread, for as long as eight years. This is partly because trees and other forest life cut down and removed actually clears a path for fires to burn and spread.

Due to the "re-burn" theory and its hype by the lumber companies and Forest Service, fear has convinced workers and others that the logging should continue. Meanwhile, years after that fire season of 2000, $16.2 million of restoration funding for that season is missing — neither the Forest Service nor any other department can account for it. Very little watershed and road repairs have been completed. Jobs are down because of damage to fisheries in the valley and to water sources. And that damage can create great health risks because of the harm to the fish people consume and contamination of the water.

The U.S. Forest Service is not filled with your friendly "Ranger Rick" and "Smokey the Bear" types. They're an extension of the government, and work to protect the bosses just like any other branch. The profit nature of capitalism destroys both the environment and the working class affected by that destruction.✪

1,000 Navajos March Against Racist Crimes



FARMINGTON, NM, Sept. 17 — One thousand Navajos marched here on September 2 to protest both the latest racist attacks on their tribe members as well as memorializing past violence going back to 1974. On June 4, three white racists brutalized a Navajo man, William Blackie, 46, shouting racist slurs at him. Six days later a white cop killed a 21-year-old Navajo youth, Clint John. His family is filing a wrongful death suit against the cop, the police department and the city.

These attacks reflect widespread racism directed against Native Americans here for decades. In 1974, three white teenagers bludgeoned and burned three Navajo men to death and were "sentenced" to reform school. Four years later, Duane Yazzue, president of the Shiprock chapter of the Navajo Nation, was shot by a white hitchhiker and lost an eye. In 2000, two white racists bludgeoned a 36-year-old Navajo woman to death. George Arthur, a Navajo Nation delegate, was beaten by racist white youths who tried to set him on fire. No one was charged in the attack.

Mr. Yazzie said many other crimes against Navajos went unreported. Mr. Arthur said, "We can tolerate certain aspects of life. But not when it comes to our dignity." (NY Times, 9/17)

While the Navajo Nation has sought federal government help in prosecuting these racists, the fact that the attacks continue unabated indicates that looking to a racist government that kills millions of black, brown, Latino and Asian people won't end the racism against Native Americans. Only ending capitalism, the source of this racism, will do the job.✪